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#### ARTICLES:

(1) Intensive debate on Livedoor scandal; What is Horie's real intention of sending 30 million yen to Takebe's son? Opposition to pursue accountability of Koizumi; LDP may submit disciplinary motion against Nagata

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Slightly Abridged)  
February 17, 2006

At a House of Representative Committee session yesterday, lawmaker Hisayasu Nagata of the largest opposition party Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) charged that former Livedoor Co. President Takafumi Horie had sent an internal e-mail directing his staff to pay 30 million yen to the second son of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe. Nagata's claim is now creating a stir. It is certain that this issue will become a main subject at an intensive deliberation today at the Budget Committee.

At yesterday's Budget Committee session, Nagata, who was posing questions on relations between the LDP and Horie regarding last year's Lower House election, suddenly started reading out a memo that said:

"I want you to arrange for me to transfer 30 million to (the son of Mr. Takebe) by the 29th if possible, but by the 31st at the latest. I want you to list" in the company's account book "as consulting fee for campaigning."

Nagata claimed that the memo was Horie's e-mail on Aug. 16 instructing his staff to send money to the second son (of Takebe). Citing the real name of Takebe's son, Nagata criticized Takebe, stating in a strong tone, "I assume that he supported Horie's campaign since he had received the money. He might sell

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his soul for money." The session was thrown into a commotion as LDP lawmakers jeered at Nagata.

Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima urged Nagata "to be careful about referring to the name of a private citizen." Nagata, however, insisted, "I have the information on where the money came from and the bank account to which it was sent, as well as when the money was transferred to that account." He then continued, saying, "If you question the credibility of the information, I want someone to prove it." He then demanded that Takebe and his son be summoned before the Diet as unsworn witnesses.

Minshuto has stepped up the offensive against the government and ruling coalition regarding the so-called "set of four issues," including the bid-rigging scandal involving the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA). The largest opposition party is now, however, focusing at the intensive deliberations on a relationship between Horie and Takebe, which has come under criticism from some LDP members. The party intends to pursue the accountability of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is also president of the LDP. That's why Nagata brought up the e-mail issue yesterday. Reportedly only some senior Minshuto members, including party head Seiji Maehara, knew the contents of the memo in question.

Soon after the committee session took a break, Takebe called committee director Toshimitsu Motegi in the office of LDP secretary general at the Diet building. Takebe then telephoned

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his son and was told by him "there was no such fact." Motegi then talked with Takebe's son on the phone, and he received the explanation from him.

Takebe's son once operated a restaurant, an Internet securities firm and other businesses. He now runs an apparel shop in Tokyo. Horie reportedly was one of his business associates who run Internet companies.

If Nagata's accusation is proved, "Mr. Takebe will not be

forgiven as a politician," said Minshuto policy chief Komei Matsumoto. Such a view will unavoidably become stronger. Some say that Takebe would have no choice but to resign. However, the view is strong questioning the credibility of Nagata's information. If Nagata's information is not credible, will be put in a difficult position. As a result, Minshuto would have to weaken its pursuit.

Nagata said, "I've got the information through a freelance reporter." He reiterated that he was unable to reveal the details about the details because of the safety of the news source. For the same reason, he distributed to the press corps the notes describing the contents of the e-mail, but did not give out copies.

All the more because Nagata stirred up a controversy with his radical words, LDP lawmakers are suspicious about his information. Nagata is serving in his third-term in the Lower House, after working at the former Finance Ministry. In 2000, the LDP submitted to the Diet a disciplinary motion against him for having wrestled with LDP Upper House lawmakers at a session to deliberate the election system reform. Recently a New Komeito lawmaker criticized Nagata at a Diet session, "Mr. Nagata made an unforgivable remark that victims of the earthquake-resistance data calcification scam want to set a fire."

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The LDP intends to urge him to present the grounds for the accusation.

If 30 million yen was really paid to Takebe's son, there are problems in terms of the election law and the tax code

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, under the Public Offices Election Law, the ceiling for an election campaign expense is decided based on the number of voters in an electoral district. The ceiling for the Lower House Hiroshima No. 6 district, from which Horie ran in the election, is about 24.2 million yen. If he violates the election law, the person in charge of accounts will be sentenced to three years or a fine up to 500,000 yen and the guilt-by-association system will be applied to the candidate. But no one has been charged so far.

Depending on who paid the 30 million yen to Takebe's son -- Livedoor or Horie -- different taxation problems will come out.

If prosecutors find that Livedoor sent the money to Takebe's son, the money will be recognized as "loan" to Horie or "director's bonus." If prosecutors find the company entered the money into its account book as expenditure, tax authorities will not recognize the money as a "loan" or "director's bonus." If prosecutors find Takebe's son did not declare the money to a tax office, a taxation problem will occur.

A source connected with Minshuto pointed out, if election campaigns are including in the consulting job for campaigning, there is a possibility that both Horie and Takebe's son will be charged with bribery.

(2) Livedoor shock: Market fundamentalism destroys morals, ethics

SANKEI (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)  
February 8, 2006

By Masahiko Fujiwara, professor at Ochanomizu University

I wrote this passage in my book Kokka no Hinkaku (The Dignity of the State), published last year:

"Americanization, including the market fundamentalism that has been the basis for Japan's ongoing economic reforms, knows no bounds. It has swept across the country, profoundly affecting not only Japan's economy but also its society, culture, and nationality. The present-day Japanese, who are obsessed by mammonism, do not look on a law-bending takeover attempt backed by financial strength - which may be described as a money game -

as dirty trick or crassness."

I wrote this, with Livedoor Co. President Horie's words and deeds in mind.

Later, prosecutors raided Livedoor. Mr. Horie was arrested. I think Horie's arrest itself is of no significance.

What should be called into question with the arrest of Mr. Horie? Is it the Securities and Exchange Law or the Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission? Or is it a problem that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in effect backed Mr. Horie as an "assassin" candidate in last year's Lower House election? Yes,

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backing him was a problem, but I can say a more serious problem is that many Japanese gave support and favored someone like Mr. Horie.

When Mr. Horie attempted to take over Nippon Broadcasting System last year, the company employees declared their objections to the idea of becoming a subsidiary of Livedoor. Mr. Horie, however, paid no attention to their wishes and coolly pursued the takeover attempt. Many Japanese viewed the attempt as a battle between a crafty, seasoned old man and a reformist-minded younger man trying to break the stifling atmosphere in Japan. They rooted for Mr. Horie.

Society losing stability

Why did this sort of thing happen? The reason lies in market fundamentalism.

For example, based on the logic that a company belongs to its stockholders, should the corporate manager fail to achieve a good result in a short run, that manager would be dismissed. To avoid this, corporate restructuring and a performance-based salary system become important, even though Japanese management had not used them in the past. The performance-based pay system would bring the opportunity for pay increases to competent personnel on the one hand, while average people would surely see their salaries decrease on the other. In addition, the number of permanent employees would be cut and the number of nonpermanent employees, whose labor cost is half that of permanent employees, would increase instead. The lifetime employment system - the most excellent working system in the world that has ensured employees' loyalty to the company - is being abandoned.

Even if you study hard and graduate from a good school, you will find it difficult to get a job because new hiring is limited. Even if you are hired by a big company, that does not ensure job security, and you could be fired at any time. If that is the case, it is of no use studying hard or continuing to stay in an ordinary job. Instead of this, it is wiser for you to become an information technology (IT) "hero." This tendency is prevailing in Japan. All this considered, I would say it is only natural that young people adored Mr. Horie.

Additionally, the declining birthrate is a major issue. The root cause is that our society has lost its stability under the influence of market fundamentalism. The public surely feels that this society cannot make children feel happy. Raising children requires huge labor from women as well as men. But this kind of labor is taken as a disadvantage under the performance-based pay system. Young people eventually become reluctant to have children.

Winners and losers

Market fundamentalism seeks to eliminate regulations, calling them obstacles to free competition. But regulations are definitely necessary to protect the weak.

Market fundamentalism polarizes the nation into a small group of winners and a large group of losers and does not allow people to exist outside of one of these two categories.

In this sort of society, the public focuses solely on how to back

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the winner. In other words, every citizen of the nation becomes a fence sitter. Recently I've come to realize there are some who hold a critical view of a military general of the Nagaoka clan in the last days of the Tokugawa shogunate, Tsuginosuke Kawai, and the Aizu clan, describing them as not being quick at seizing an opportunity. This would mean that one Japanese virtue, remaining loyal, is now seen as something stupid.

Widening disparity in wealth

Imagine what would happen to society if it were trampled down by market fundamentalism. The United States is a good example of this. The average annual income of corporate managers in that country is 1.3 billion yen, while that of the rank and file is three million yen. The US infant mortality rate is higher than that of even the autocratic state Cuba. The reason is that many Americans cannot afford health insurance. In the US, citizens have to somehow survive cutthroat competition. For this, the US has dozens of times as many lawyers and psychotherapists as Japan. Their businesses are thriving.

Of the 13 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Mexico has the largest disparity in wealth, followed by the US. Where do you think Japan ranks? Japan, which was once a country in which everyone was said to be middle class, now ranked number five.

Shedding the national character that had been its pride in the world, Japan is running on the path to becoming a vulgar and coarse society like the US.

The Japanese public, albeit obscurely, is in fear of living in such a society. This fear leads to a sense of impasse felt by the Japanese. The root cause lies in market fundamentalism, but the people, unaware of this, supported Mr. Horie, who is the child of (market fundamentalism).

When incidents like the Livedoor case occur, legal measures are quickly prepared. Doing so may be unavoidable, but a country that is ruled by a broad range of laws is shameful, I think. The essence of the incident this time is that market fundamentalism hurts not only the economy and society but also the beautiful virtues of the Japanese. The most wonderful country, in my view, is a country where the people discipline themselves with their strong awareness of morals and ethics, as Japan did in the past.

Masahiko Fujiwara: Born in Manchuria in 1943 and is a mathematician. Graduated from University of Tokyo Faculty of Science and is now a professor at Ochanomizu University after holding such posts as research fellow at the University of Michigan and associate professor at the University of Colorado. Majored in indefinite equations. Is the author of such books as Wakaki Suugakusha no America (The America of a Young Mathematician), Harukanaru Kenburiiji (Far Away Cambridge), and Sokoku to wa Kokugo (The National Language is the Homeland). Was awarded the Seiron Shimpu Prize for his writing.

(3) Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) leader Maehara firm about describing China as a threat, despite possible objections in the party; Prelude to party presidential race?

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Almost full)  
February 16, 2006

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Minshuto will give shape to its unified view about China's military strength before the end of the month. The party leadership, including President Seiji Maehara, intends to specify in the unified view that China is a "real threat," but they also

intend to express their desire to strengthen friendly relations with China by removing concerns through continuing dialogue. This would be the first hurdle Maehara has to clear before unifying the party view next on foreign and security policy in June, a challenge on which he has staked his presidential post. It is also likely to be a prelude to the presidential race slated for September, given possible objections to Maehara's attitude from his party members.

The party's next cabinet's Foreign Minister Keiichiro Asao and Defense Agency Director-General Akihisa Nagashima will soon prepare a rough draft of the unified view and present it to the party's joint foreign and defense affairs meeting. The draft is likely to continue Maehara's view of looking on China as a threat as he had stated in a speech in the United States last December.

The government does not recognize China as a threat at present. In the written government reply approved at a cabinet meeting in January, "threat" is defined as coming to the fore when a capability of invading other countries and an intention to invade other countries join hands. This written reply indicates that Japan does not think China has any intention to invade.

But the Minshuto leadership's basic position is that China could be recognized as a threat, given its capabilities, including "its increased military spending at the pace of 10% or more annually, its deployment of missiles to cover Japanese territory and its nuclear weapons," according to Maehara, even though it does not have any intention to invade. By recognizing that country as a threat, the party intends to highlight the importance of diplomatic efforts to avoid disputes.

The party's unified view is likely to mention the need to promote cooperation (with China) in such areas as energy and the environment, as well as to enhance the transparency (of China's military spending) via military exchanges. It also aims to cast a critical eye on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi who as a result of his continued visits to Yasukuni Shrine, has almost failed to have a top-level exchange with China.

This tone is gaining a certain degree of understanding among the party's conservative lawmakers. If he succeeded in getting a consensus also on the view of allowing the exercising of the right to collective defense but with conditions attached by containing objections from former socialists in the party, Maehara could strengthen his cohesive power in the party, thereby possibly gaining an advantage in fighting the presidential race in September.

"Your thinking is behind the times," Maehara told Yoshio Hachiro on Feb. 14. Hachiro is a former socialist and an aide to Lower House speaker Takahiro Yokomichi. Hachiro advised Maehara not to rush to get a consensus on foreign and security policy, but Maehara did not listen to him.

Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama held talks with Ichiro Ozawa in

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Tokyo on Feb. 8. Hatoyama told Ozawa: "Our party is pursuing the shadow of the Koizumi cabinet. I'd like you to support President

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Maehara." Ozawa remained silent.

(4) Calls for hard-line measures against North Korea growing stronger; Government studying ways to apply pressure

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
February 17, 2006

Calls are growing stronger for a hard line against North Korea following the Japan-North Korea intergovernmental talks earlier this month that failed to bring progress to the issue of Japanese nationals abducted to North Korea. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) decided yesterday that if the abduction issue fails to see a settlement, the party would draft North Korean human rights

legislation obligating the government to impose economic sanctions on North Korea. The government also decided at its director general-level meeting to study using pressure by strictly applying existing legislation to the North.

At yesterday's LDP abduction issue taskforce meeting, many members criticized local governments' preferential tax treatment for facilities connected with the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon).

The meeting also decided to approve an outline of the North Korean human rights legislation to get it approved in the current Diet session.

The LDP characterizes it as the third sanction against the North following the revised Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law and the Law Banning Specific Ships from Entering Japanese Ports.

The major opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) is also planning to submit to the current Diet session legislation to rescue victims of crimes against human rights, with North Korean defectors in mind. The Diet may pass a new sanctions law in the current session on the back of growing public opinion critical of North Korea.

A group of lawmakers, including Upper House member Ichita Yamamoto, has briefed Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe on the outline of the North Korean human rights bill. Abe was visibly pleased with their efforts to establish new legislation. The government's position is to keep channels for dialogue with the North alive and do away with economic sanctions legislation for the time being. A person close to Abe explained: "If the LDP hardens its stance, it will help the government elicit compromises from the North behind the scenes in intergovernmental talks."

The government will speed up its efforts to come up with ways to apply pressure on the North by strictly applying existing legislation under the initiative of the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). In yesterday's abduction issue expert council meeting of senior officials of concerned government offices, the Internal Affairs and Communication Ministry reported that some local governments have been considering reexamining preferential tax treatment to Chongryon-related facilities.

The expert council also appointed Cabinet Office Parliamentary Secretary Eriko Yamatani as officer in charge of support for

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abductees and their families. The group also decided to improve

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the abduction issue corner in the Kantei website.

The outlook for the next round of government-to-government talks looks gloomy, as such a trend in Japan is certain to draw a fierce reaction from the North.

(5) Interview with University of Shizuoka Prof. Hajime Izumi on North Korea: Pyongyang paying close attention to Tokyo's intent for normalization; North wants to confirm Pyongyang declaration as a cornerstone of bilateral ties

ASAHI (Page 15) (Full)  
February 16, 2006

Hajime Izumi, a professor at the University of Shizuoka, is well informed on the Korean Peninsula situation. The Asahi Shimbun interviewed him on what will come out of the recent talks between Japan and North Korea and what challenges are in store.

-- What's your view of the talks this time?

Izumi: It was the first round, so we'll have to wait for the talks to go through several more rounds to see what kind of

results they can produce. The Japanese delegation was willing to go on with the talks. But it's difficult to continue them if the North does not take any action on the abduction issue. That's the atmosphere in Japan, and North Korea understands that. The North wonders if Japan really wants to normalize diplomatic relations. They suspect that Japan might not be interested in anything but the abduction issue. They will not show their card on the abduction issue until they see if Japan is serious about normalization.

-- How do you think Japan should respond on the abduction issue?

Izumi: The most important thing is the abduction issue. At the same time, however, Japan will need to tell them that Japan will also work hard to normalize diplomatic relations if the abduction issue and security issues are settled. Otherwise, North Korea won't respond. There's no problem as far as the government applies the current law even more strictly to put the screws on the North. They might stiffen their attitude, but they won't call off the talks.

-- In the normalization talks, too, North Korea called for compensation. There's a gap with Japan.

Izumi: That's what North Korea has claimed time and again. If the bilateral talks boil down to a certain extent, they might even retract that claim, I think. But speaking from their way of thinking, they will say whatever they like to say, even while knowing that may not go well.

-- How do you think North Korea will come out?

Izumi: I still have no idea. (Korean Workers Party) General Secretary Kim Jong Il doesn't have to attain diplomatic

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normalization while Prime Minister Koizumi is in office, so he's free from pressure. But General Secretary Kim is probably conscious of his age. There are five years or so left before he turns 70. I wonder how much he can do during that time. They've had nothing remarkable in their relations with Japan and the United States since the 1990s. After the Soviet Union's collapse,

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they only accomplished something in their ties with China and South Korea. That's all they've got. If they think of trying to rebuild or develop their country, there's no choice but to improve their relations with Japan and the United States. That's the only way left for the North.

-- In the talks, Japan delivered Prime Minister Koizumi's message to General Secretary Kim.

Izumi: Japan can tell them that the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang declaration is a cornerstone of bilateral relations between Japan and North Korea. If we do so, North Korea can go ahead. That's because the Pyongyang declaration is a very important document that was signed by General Secretary Kim himself. North Korea fears the case where the post-Koizumi government scraps the Pyongyang declaration. I'm not saying the bilateral relationship between Japan and North Korea will be undermined. It will hurt the justifiability of General Secretary Kim. The North probably wants to confirm while the Koizumi government is in office that the Pyongyang declaration will remain the foundation of bilateral relations between Japan and North Korea.

-- What about reactions from the US, China, and South Korea over the Japan-DPRK talks?

Izumi: In the past three years, Japan has talked with North Korea about the abduction issue only. Now, unlike before, Japan is ready to negotiate various other issues in wide-ranging areas. This stance gets high marks not only from China and South Korea but also from the United States. That's because the United States can share most security issues with Japan.



-- Will the bilateral talks affect the suspended six-party talks over North Korea's nuclear programs?

Izumi: It was important for Japan to tell the North that security is a matter of serious concern to Japan. They think Japan is better than China to get things transmitted to the United States. The six-party talks could resume late this month at the earliest if the moneylaundering issue is settled. But even if the six-party talks were resumed, they would only set up working groups. North Korea will probably assume a wait-and-see attitude until this November's off-year election in the United States.

(6) Final ODA reform plan calls for continued use of the name JBIC

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)  
February 17, 2006

The government and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have crafted their final plan to reform the official development assistance (ODA) program. The plan is designed to dissolve the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to integrate its yen loan department into the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and its international financial department into the new government-affiliated financial institution to be established by absorbing all state-run financial institutions. The government and LDP have also decided to continue to call the new financial institution's international department the JBIC and keep its top post in line with the LDP Policy Research Council's view.

The Council on Overseas Economic Cooperation (chaired by former

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Public Prosecutor General Akio Harada), established under Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, is expected to unveil the plan today.

The government has decided to continue to use the name JBIC in consideration of business circles putting importance on the JBIC's high international recognition. The JBIC will serve as the international department in the government's new financial institution, which is likely to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Finance Ministry. A retired government official may assume its top post, as before.

Currently, 13 government agencies, including the Foreign Ministry, are responsible for planning ODA projects; the JBIC and JICA are responsible for implementing yen loans and providing technological cooperation, respectively; and the Foreign Ministry for grant aid. Under the new system, what is tentatively called the External Economic Cooperation Council will handle the ODA exclusively.

(7) Interview with former Ambassador to US Kuriyama, Kyorin University Prof. Takubo on Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine, soured Japan-China ties

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 17, 2006

Japan and China are at a deadlock in their ties. Beijing has been refusing to hold a summit meeting of the two countries' leaders, and Tokyo remains unable to find a way out of the impasse. Some deem it difficult to fundamentally improve the relations all the more because China is exploiting Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's annual practice of paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine as a diplomatic card. In the meantime, Takakazu Kuriyama, a former ambassador to the United States, wrote an essay, "Reconciliation-Challenges facing Japan's diplomacy," for Gaiko Forum in its January and February issues, calling for Koizumi to stop visiting the shrine. However, Tadae Takubo, a visiting professor at Kyorin University, wants the premier to continue his Yasukuni visit. The Sankei Shimbun interviewed both of them.

Stop visiting the shrine: Kuriyama

-- You urge Prime Minister Koizumi to stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine. What's your real motive?

Kuriyama: Prime Minister Koizumi has said he visits Yasukuni Shrine to "mourn for people who died in the war" and to "renew a pledge not to fight a war." There's not the slightest doubt about the prime minister's sentiment. Also, half of the responsibility rests with China for the two countries' failure to reconcile well. However, Japan, as a country that victimized its neighbors, should face up to history and self-reflect on that, and Japan must continue its efforts to have that reflected in its foreign policy and in its Asia policy. We can't attain reconciliation until China and South Korea see Japan as differing from what it used to be in the prewar days. It's important for Japan's national security to stabilize relations with South Korea, and I think Japan will look different in its state and dignity depending on whether Japan can be well reconciled with these two countries.

-- The prime minister has noted that compromising on the Yasukuni

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issue is one thing and getting along well with each other, that is, between Japan and China, is another.

Kuriyama: It's difficult to reconcile Japan and China. The biggest reason for that is nationalism on the side of China. The Communist Party of China justifies its existence at home. They say they won in their war of resistance against Japan. That's the biggest reason for them to assert the party's justifiability. Indeed, I can't expect China to stop raising history issues even if a Japanese prime minister refrains from visiting Yasukuni Shrine. It's unrealistic to expect China's policy toward Japan to change in a visible way when it comes to oil and gas exploitation in the East China Sea, territorial claims over the Senkaku islets, or Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. If that is why Japan does not make efforts for reconciliation, that's wrong as a matter of diplomatic stance. Reconciliation is not just between Japan and China. That's the question of how to get along with the international community as a whole.

-- Since the war ended, many Japanese prime ministers have paid homage at Yasukuni Shrine. Is this also wrong?

Kuriyama: I think so. When I was a bureaucrat of the Foreign Ministry, I kept from saying anything that differs from the political judgment at the time. However, I thought to myself that Japan's policy during the first half of the 20th century was consistently wrong. I think the greater part of those who were victimized in the war fought purely for Japan and lost their lives. It's only natural and not strange for the Japanese people to mourn for their souls. However, in the case of the prime minister and government officials bearing responsible positions, their visits to Yasukuni Shrine will undoubtedly cause the international community to wonder if they're really doing so purely for that.

-- What made you write that essay at this point of time?

Kuriyama: I have a very serious sense of crisis about the rise of nationalism. Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin irritated Japanese nationalism when he visited Japan in 1998. That deteriorated Japanese sentiment toward China. In recent years, Japanese nationalism has been growing strong. The international community might have a feeling of vague anxiety, probably wondering where Japan is going.

-- The international community's feeling of anxiety comes from misunderstanding, doesn't it?

Kuriyama: That's where my view differs a little. Unlike Germany, Japan has made no appropriate overview of its conducts during the first half of the 20th century when Japan took imperialistic policy and expansionism. That's the problem remaining left behind.

-- History has yet to come up with a definite evaluation of the past war.

Kuriyama: When I was director general of the Treaties Bureau at the Foreign Ministry, I stated before the Diet that the international community regards that as a war of aggression. The Japanese people might disagree to that view. However, the international community has already handed down its judgment. If

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a Japanese prime minister tells the United States that that war was a war for self-defense, Japan and the United States can't get along with each other. Unfortunately, the history of mankind has seen a number of wars. Most of those histories were written by those who won wars. Those who lost wars might think that is unfair. However, histories written by winners have been accepted as histories. The Japanese people must accept that.

Continue to visit the shrine: Takubo

Mr. Kuriyama sounds as if to say Japan's foreign policy toward China and South Korea is in a fix. However, Japan was somewhat abnormal before Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. After the war, Japan made unnecessary apologies over the comfort women and school textbook issues. Its total settlement was the Murayama statement of 1995 with "deep remorse and heartfelt apology." The prime minister is on that track. But I think the Yasukuni issue is a chance to get it back on the right track. We should exactly tell them that we can't apologize even for their interventions in Japan's internal affairs. By doing so, we can get along with each other as sovereign nations over the mid- to long-term.

In his view of history, Mr. Kuriyama seems to say things only about the Manchurian Incident and Japan-China relations in the days a little before the Manchurian Incident and up until Japan's defeat in the war in 1945. What led Japan to the war? Why did the Manchurian Incident break out? We must look into history before that. We must take an overall view of history from the spectrum of Japan-China relations, the United States' policy toward Asia, and the former Soviet Union's policy toward Asia. That war is multifaceted and is too complicated to simplify countries as parties that victimized others and as parties that were victimized.

In his essay, Mr. Kuriyama says the Self-Defense Forces is "obviously a kind of military muscle." But he takes a look only at hardware or weapons. The SDF is a far cry from the now-defunct military. The SDF Law corresponds to the police law system. Even when sending SDF personnel overseas, Japan will have to make a special law, or Japan can do nothing. People in the Diet are now working to amend Japan's postwar constitution in order to turn the SDF into the status of a normal military entity. I don't know why this motive is nationalism.

We should gradually shape our Japanese view of history. It's all right to make it a principle to take omnidirectional diplomacy. But it's only natural that there are priorities. The most important thing is the Japan-US alliance. China is becoming a military threat, and it's only natural to make the Japan-US alliance even closer.

SCHIEFFER